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ABSTRACT

This report presents status and trend data in several areas relevant to Latino children in the United States. The Latino population under age 18 years is growing faster than that of any other racial and ethnic group, and the challenges confronting these children have implications for cities and states where they live. While Latino children are likely to live in two-parent working families, the proportion of Latino children under 18 living in single-parent households has remained high over the past decade. These families are especially likely to be poor. The proportion of female-headed families is greatest for Puerto Ricans. Not enough Latino children participate in pre-primary education, and many drop out of high school. Among Latinos, Mexican Americans are the least likely to have high school diplomas. Hispanic Americans have persistently high teenage birth rates. A large share of Latino children live in poverty, with Puerto Rican children the poorest of all. A significant segment of Latino children is without health insurance, with children of immigrants especially likely to lack health insurance. The paper concludes with a brief review of why this matters to the nation and describes initiatives that can make a difference (the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Children's Health Insurance Program). Two appendixes present statistics on children in Puerto Rico, and Latino children and federal assistance programs. (SM)

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U.S. Latino Children:

A Status Report

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U.S. Latino Children: A Status Report

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Introduction

Hispanics* account for 11% of the total U.S. population.** Of the more than 31 million Latinos in the U.S., more than one-third are under 18 years of age. The Hispanic child population is growing faster than that of any other racial and ethnic group.

Two characteristics stand out in the socio-demographic status of Latino children. First, as a group, Latino children are especially likely to live in two-parent, working families. Second, their projected rate of population growth means that they represent a large share of future workers and taxpayers that the nation will depend upon to sustain and drive the economy.

In the overall socioeconomic profile of Latino children, a review of the data shows an increase in the Latino population that is under 18, without a concomitant improvement in key social and economic indicators. There are six sets of issues that have surfaced over the past decade that signal a loud call for significant investments now to ensure that these children have favorable beginnings and successful outcomes. Specifically, among Latino children:

- A significant proportion lives in single-mother families
- Not enough participate in pre-primary education programs
- Too many leave high school without a diploma
- A growing number are born to teenagers
- A large share lives in poverty
- A significant segment is without health insurance

Several other social indicators warrant attention, including the distressingly high proportion of Latino children who are HIV+ and the growing rate of violence among Latino youth. However, the data suggest that public policy, research, and community-level program responses are needed to address these six broad sets of issues and would have a significant impact on improving the overall socioeconomic status of Latino children. The following pages offer a "snapshot" of status and trend data on each of these issues; the paper concludes with a brief review of why this matters to the nation and points to some initiatives that can make a difference.

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* The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably to refer to persons who identify themselves as Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, Dominican, Spanish, or other Hispanic origin.

** This does not include the 3.9 million residents on the island of Puerto Rico since U.S. Census Bureau data on Hispanics in the U.S. do not include data on residents of Puerto Rico. Except for the last section of this paper ("Children in Puerto Rico"), the data cited throughout this discussion refer only to Latinos living in the 50 states.

Population

THE GROWTH IN THE LATINO POPULATION THAT IS UNDER 18 IS SUBSTANTIAL. To set the context for an examination of Latino children, a review of the data shows that the number and proportion of Hispanic children in the U.S. is growing rapidly. This demographic change is critical because it means that the challenges confronting Latino children have implications for the cities and states in which they live. Several issues are key:

- **Hispanic children are a significant portion of the total Hispanic population.** As Figure 1 shows, in 1998, over one-third (35.4%) of the total Hispanic population was estimated to be under age 18, a larger proportion than either the Black (32.4%) or White population (23.5%).*
- **The number of U.S. Hispanic children has increased significantly over the past two decades.** As Table 1 shows, the number of U.S. Hispanic children doubled between 1980 and 2000. Moreover, the number of Latino children is projected to grow by 32.4% between 2000 and 2025, as compared to 20.3% and 29.5%, respectively, for White and Black children over that time period. While the data in Table 1 were projected as of 1996, the latest data from 1999 show that Latino children are now the largest group of minority children in the nation.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 BY RACE/ETHNICITY 1980-2010 (PROJECTED)

IN MILLIONS

Race/Ethnicity	1980	1990	2000	2010
Hispanic	5.3	7.8	10.5*	13.5
White	52.5	47.6	55.9	55.3
Black	9.5	9.6	11.5	12.5

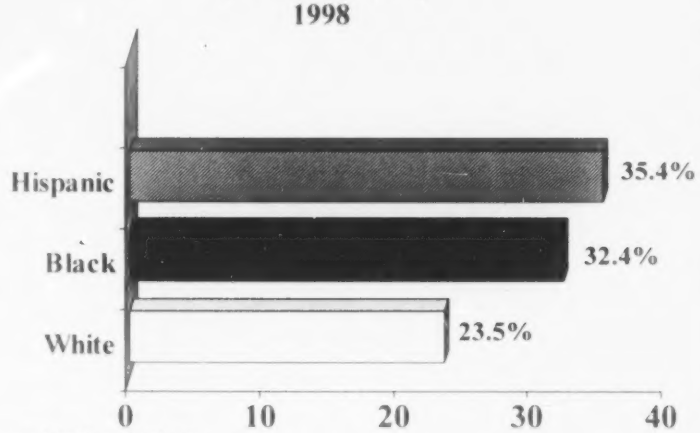
Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children 1996, Table PF 1.1, p. 11.

* Percentages were computed by NCLR using Census numbers.

- **The percentage of all U.S. children that is Hispanic has increased since 1980 and will continue to rise through this century.** As illustrated in Figure 2, from 1980 to 1998, the segment of the U.S. child population that is Hispanic increased from 9% to 15%. By 2020, the U.S. Bureau of the Census projects that almost one in four children in the U.S. will be Hispanic.

FIGURE 1

Population Under 18 years of Age by Race/Ethnicity 1998

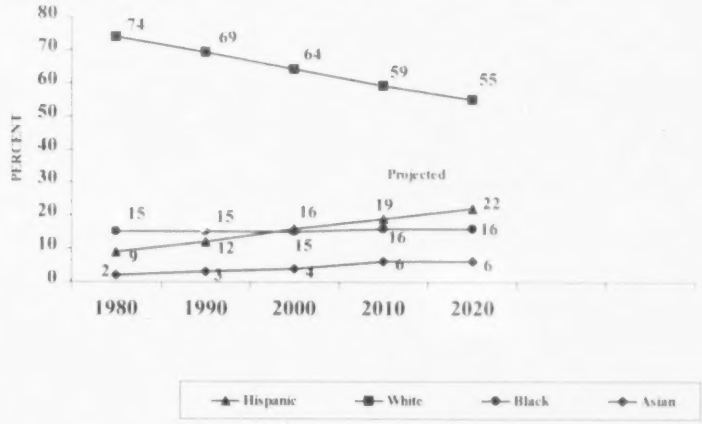


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

- **The vast majority of Hispanic children were born in the U.S.** In 1980, 86% of Latino children under 20 were born in the U.S. By 1990, as Figure 3 shows, that proportion had dropped slightly as 15.8% of Latino children under 20 were foreign-born. That same year, the pro-

FIGURE 2

Percent Distribution of U.S. Children Under Age 18 by Race/Ethnicity Selected Years, 1980-1990, and Projected, 2000-2020

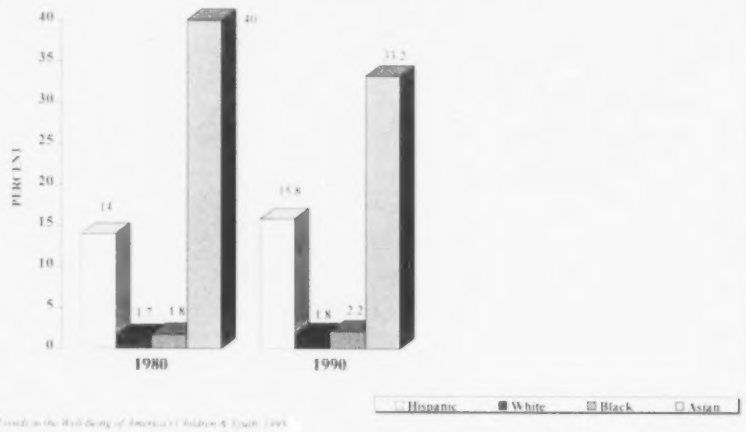


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1095

portion of foreign-born children was highest for Asian children; one-third (33.2%) were born outside of the United States. Meanwhile, among both Black and White children, the proportion that was foreign-born in 1980 and 1990 was no more than 2.2%. The most recent available data from 1997 show that 84.4% of Latino children were born in the U.S., 1.9% were born in Puerto Rico, and 13% were foreign-born.[1]

FIGURE 3

Percent of U.S. Children Under Age 20 by Birth Status and Race/Ethnicity 1980 and 1990



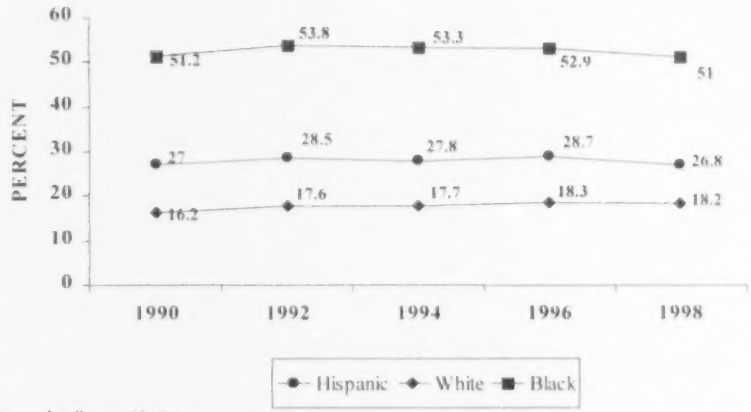
Family Structure

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF LATINO CHILDREN LIVES IN SINGLE-MOTHER FAMILIES. Children who grow up in single-parent families are especially likely to be poor, since they often lack the support of a second breadwinner. In particular, children in single-mother families face the stress of an absent father, which is critical for their development; and their mothers earn low or no wages, since they tend to have limited education and work experience or may not work if they do not have child care. Several concerns stand out:

- **While Latino children are likely to live in two-parent families, the proportion of Latino children under 18 living in single-mother families or with only one parent has remained high over the past decade.** Almost two-thirds (63.6%) of Hispanic children lived in two-parent families in 1998. White children are the most likely to live in two-parent families; that year, 74% lived with two parents. By contrast, slightly more than one-third (36.4%) of Black children lived with two parents, a rate less than half the national average. Similar to the trend for other American families, the percentage of Latino children living with single mothers only has remained high throughout the past decade. In 1990, 26.6% of Hispanic children lived with their mothers only; while in 1998, that proportion was 26.8%. In comparison, the proportion of White children who lived in single-mother families increased slightly from 16.1% to 18.2% during this time. Similar data show that more than half of African American children lived in single-mother families in both 1990 and 1998 (51.2% and 51%, respectively).[2]

FIGURE 4

Female-Headed Households with Children under 18 by Race/Ethnicity Selected Years 1990-1998



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

- **The proportion of Hispanic female-headed households with children under 18 has remained fairly constant over the past decade, but continues to be high.** In 1990, 26.3% of Hispanic households with children under 18 were headed by

women; by the end of the decade, the proportion was similar, 26.7%. As Figure 4 shows, among Black households, the proportion headed by women was similarly stable throughout the decade, but extremely high, at 53% in both 1990 and 1998. There was a slight increase in White female-headed households with children under 18 over this time period, from 15.9% in 1990 to 17% in 1998.

- **The proportion of female-headed families is greater for Puerto Ricans than for other major U.S. Latino subgroups.** Among Hispanics, Puerto Ricans were the most likely to have families headed by a woman only in 1999, the most recent year for which such data are available. More than one-third of Puerto Rican families were headed by single mothers (37.2%), followed by Central and South Americans (23.8%) and Mexican Americans (21.3%). Cubans are the least likely among Latinos to have female-headed families (17%).[3]

- **Latino children are the least likely of all children to receive child support.** Two in five Hispanic children with a nonresident parent (40%) received child support in 1998, compared to 48% of Black children, and 58% of White children.[4]

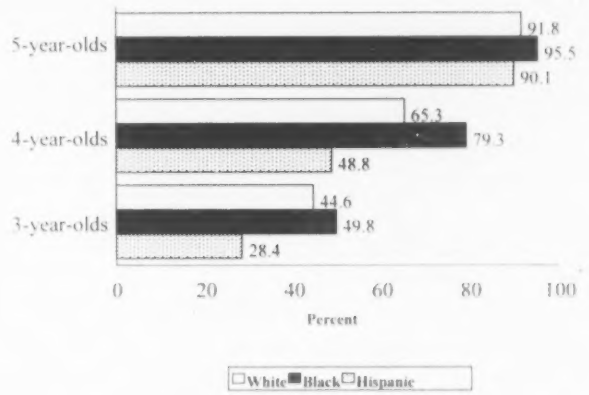
Education

NOT ENOUGH LATINO CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, AND MANY LEAVE HIGH SCHOOLS WITHOUT A DIPLOMA. Education is the most important predictor of future social and economic well-being. In particular, research has underscored that the first five years of a child's development are critical to educational success. In addition, the increasingly competitive economy requires strong and long-term educational preparation. Yet, for Latino children and youth, several indicators point to concern:

- **Despite the advantages of pre-primary education, three- and four-year-old Latino children are the least likely to be enrolled in such programs.** In 1996, slightly more than one in four Hispanic three-year-olds were enrolled in early education programs, compared to one-half of Black children and 45% of White children, as shown in Figure 5. Among four-year-olds, the proportion rises to 49% of Hispanics, 79% of Blacks, and 65% of Whites.
- **Latino children are the least likely of all children to participate in Head Start.** In 1996, 17.9% of children partici-

FIGURE 5

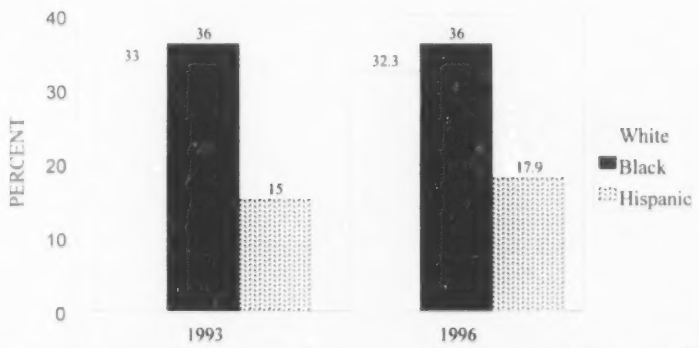
Percent of U.S. Children Enrolled in Preprimary Programs by Age and Race/Ethnicity 1996



Source: *The Condition of Education 1997*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, June 1999.

FIGURE 6

Percent of U.S. Children Participating in Head Start by Race/Ethnicity 1993 and 1996

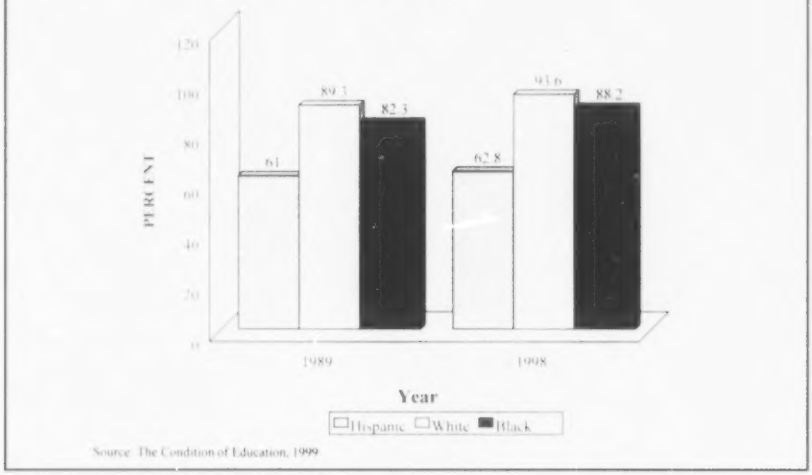


Sources: Head Start Statistical Fact Sheets, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 1994, 1997.

pating in Head Start, up only slightly from 15% in 1993, were Latino. By contrast, as Figure 6 illustrates, 36% of participant children in Head Start were African American and 32.3% were White children in 1996, similar to their participation levels three years earlier.

FIGURE 7

High School Completion Rates by Race/Ethnicity 1989 and 1998



Source: The Condition of Education, 1999

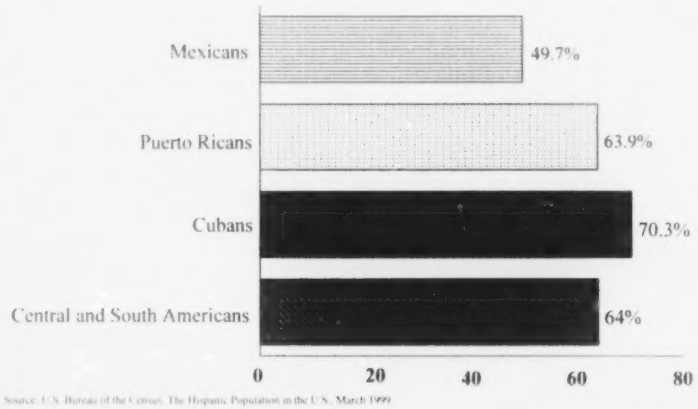
- **There exists a significant and persistent disparity between the proportion of Latinos and other Americans who are high school graduates.** In 1989, 61% of Latinos had high school diplomas, compared to 82.3% of African Americans and 89.3% of Whites. By 1998, the proportion of Latinos who were high school graduates remained relatively steady at 62.8%, while the share of African-Americans who were high school graduates rose to 88.2%, and that of Whites increased to 93.6%.

* These data refer to "status" drop-outs – persons who are not enrolled in school and who are not high school graduates. People who have received GED credentials are counted as graduates.

- **The dropout rate* of Latino students has remained disproportionately high for the past decade.** Data show that 35.8% of Latino students left school without a diploma in 1988. By contrast, the drop-out rate for Black and White students was 14.5% and 9.6%, respectively, that year. In 1998, among 16-24-year-olds, the dropout rate for Latinos was 29.4%, or more than twice that for Blacks (13.8%) and nearly four times that for Whites (7.7%).

FIGURE 8

High School Completion Rates by Latino Subgroups 1999



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, The Hispanic Population in the U.S., March 1999

- **Among Latinos, Mexican Americans are the least likely to have high school diplomas.** As Figure 8 illustrates, among Latino subgroups, 49.7% of Mexicans identified themselves as "high school graduate or more," compared to 63.9% of Puerto Ricans in 1999. By contrast, 70.3% of Cubans and 64% of Central and South Americans were high school graduates that year.[5]

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Teenage Pregnancy

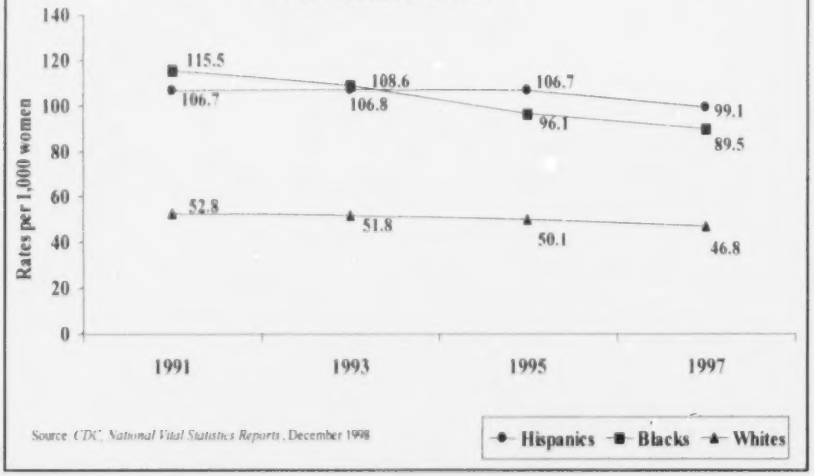
DATA SHOW A PERSISTENTLY HIGH HISPANIC TEENAGE BIRTH RATE. Hispanic teenage births, especially those that are unplanned and occur outside of marriage, have serious consequences for the babies, the mothers, and their partners. Children born to teenage mothers are especially likely to grow up in poverty and to have poor educational experiences and outcomes. Relevant data show that:

- **Hispanic teenagers are at particularly high risk of pregnancy.** The percentage of Hispanic adolescents who are sexually experienced increased from 49% in 1988 to 55% in 1995. During this period, the proportion of African American and White teenagers who were sexually experienced decreased. Hispanic adolescents are also less likely than either White or Black teenagers to use contraception. While more than 80% of non-Hispanic White teenagers and nearly three-quarters of African American teenagers reported using a contraceptive method at first intercourse, only 53% of Hispanic teenagers said they did so. Among young women, in 1995, 42% of all Latina teenagers aged 15 to 19 reported that they did not use any form of contraception the first time they had intercourse, compared to 24% of all girls in the same age category.[6]

- **Despite national declines in teenage pregnancy and birth rates, Hispanics continue to have the highest birth rate compared to teenagers of all major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.** According to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), although there has been a slight decline in Hispanic teenage birth rates from 1991 to

FIGURE 9

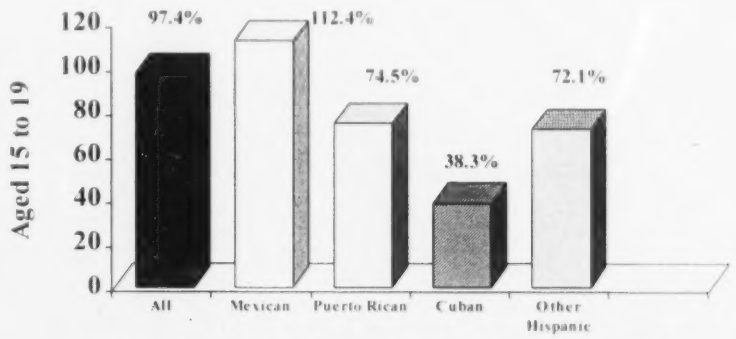
Birth Rates for U.S. Teenagers Ages 15-19 Years by Race/Ethnicity Selected Years 1991-1997



Source: *CDC, National Vital Statistics Reports*, December 1998

1997, as shown in Figure 9, Latina teenagers are the most likely of all young women to have a baby. Among Hispanic teens aged 15-19, there were 99.1 births per 1,000 women in 1997, compared to 89.5 per 1,000 for Black adolescents and 46.8 per 1,000 for White teenagers. Moreover, 1997 data show that almost three-quarters (72%) of Latina adolescents aged 15 to 19 who gave birth were unmarried, a figure slightly lower than that of all teenagers (78%).[7]

FIGURE 10
Teen Birth Rates by Hispanic Subgroup 1997



Source: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Fact Sheet, Teen Pregnancy and Childbearing Among Latinos in the U.S., May 1999

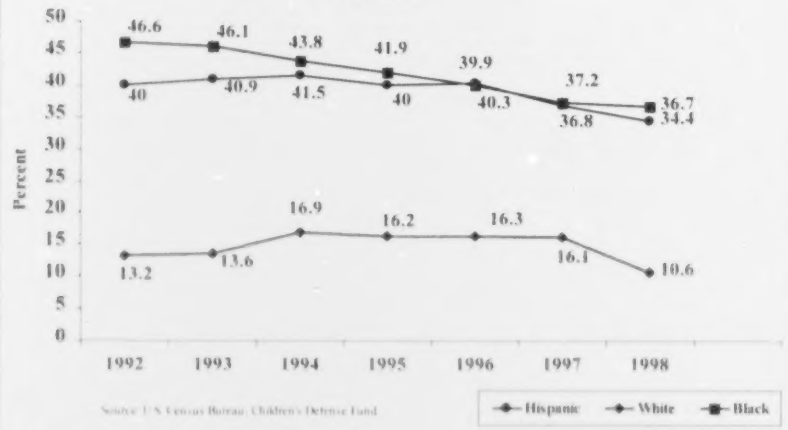
- **Births to Latina teenagers vary by Hispanic subgroup.** Data from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy indicate that Mexican Americans had the highest teen birth rate (112.4 per 1,000) among Hispanic 15-to-19-year-olds in 1997, followed by Puerto Rican teenagers (74.9 per 1,000) as shown in Figure 10. Cuban American adolescents had the lowest teenage birth rate among Hispanic subgroups that year (38.3 per 1,000).[8]

Poverty

A LARGE SHARE OF LATINO CHILDREN LIVES IN POVERTY. Poverty among Latino children has been a serious problem for over two decades. Research has shown that child poverty is associated with poor health, school failure, drug use, and teenage pregnancy, among other social risks. Latino child poverty is especially troubling since a significant share of Latino children who are poor live in two-parent families and have at least one parent who works. For some groups of Latino children, living in single-parent families exacerbates poverty. Highlights of the data show that:

FIGURE 11

Percent of Persons Under 18 Living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity 1992-1998



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Defense Fund

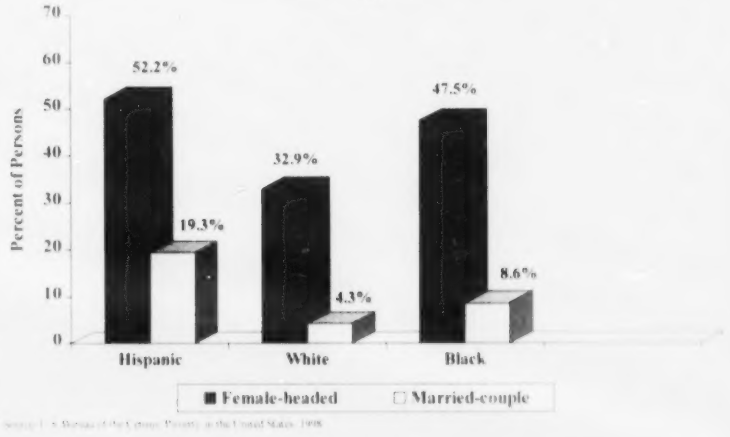
- **Poverty among Hispanic children is severe and has been disproportionately high throughout the past decade.** In 1998, over one-third (34.4%) of Hispanic children lived below the poverty level,* compared to 10.6% of White children and 36.7% of Black children. From 1992 to 1998, the Latino child poverty rate remained fairly constant – and high – with two in five Latino children living in poverty. There have been indicators of a modest decline in this rate since then, as Figure 11 shows.
- **Hispanic families with children continue to experience substantially higher poverty rates than families without children.** In 1998, over one-quarter (28.6%) of

* The federal poverty level in 1998 was $13,003 for a family of three and $16,660 for a family of four.

Hispanic families with children were poor, compared to 8.8% of Hispanic families without children. This compares to 9.8% of White and 30.5% of Black families with children. Among Whites and Blacks, 2.8% and 10.4%, respectively, of families without children were poor.[9]

FIGURE 12

Poverty Rates by Family Type and Race/Ethnicity 1998



- **Regardless of family type and when compared to non-Hispanic families, Hispanic families with children are more likely to live in poverty.** As depicted in Figure 12, in 1998, 52.2% of Hispanic female-headed families with children lived in poverty, compared to 32.9% of comparable White families and 47.5% of comparable Black families. Hispanic married-couple families with children are four times as likely as comparable White families (19.3% vs. 4.3%), and twice as likely as comparable Black families (8.6%), to be poor.

- **Hispanic poverty varies widely across states.** According to a recent survey by the Urban Institute, Hispanics were significantly poorer than their counterparts nationwide in the states of Massachusetts, New York, and Texas. Conversely, in Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, and Wisconsin, Hispanics were significantly less poor than the national average for Latinos.[10]

- **Puerto Rican children are the poorest of all Latino children, and their poverty rate has remained disproportionately high over the past three decades.** As Table 2 shows, the poverty rate of Puerto Rican children has not changed drastically over the past 30 years; in 1989, 48.4% of Puerto Rican children were poor, compared to 46.1% in 1980, and 39.0% in 1970.[11] In 1999, more than two in five (43.5%) Puerto Rican children lived below the poverty level, compared to more than one-third (35.4%) of Mexican children, more than one-fourth (26.6%) of Central and South American children, and 16.4% of Cuban children.

TABLE 2

CHILD POVERTY RATES BY LATINO SUBGROUP
1970-1999

Subgroup	1970	1980	1989	1999
Mexican	31.9%	28.2%	37.1%	35.4%
Puerto Rican	39.0	46.1	48.4	43.5
Cuban	14.8%	13.9	23.8	16.4

Sources: Miranda, Leticia C., Latino Child Poverty in the U.S. and The Hispanic Population in the U.S., March 1999, February 2000.

Health Insurance

A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF LATINO CHILDREN IS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE. Although health insurance is considered a "fringe" benefit provided by some employers, access to regular health care and prevention is essential for a child's development and well-being. For more than a decade, Latino children have been the group of American children least likely to have health insurance coverage. Given their growing share of the future U.S. workforce, their health status will become increasingly important to the nation. In particular, data show that:

- **Latino children are especially likely to lack health insurance coverage.** One in three Latino children (30%) were uninsured in 1998, compared to one in five White children and one in seven Black children.[12] Across all income levels, fewer than half of Hispanic and African American children had private coverage.[13] The vast majority of White children were privately insured. Among low-income children, 29% of Hispanic children were uninsured, compared to 16% of Black children, and 19% of White children.[14]
- **Lack of health insurance for Latinos is prevalent in Texas and California.** Both Texas and California rank first and third, respectively, in their overall uninsured rate. This high ranking is explained in large part by the share of Latino residents in these states without health insurance. One-third (35%) of all uninsured Hispanics reside in California and nearly one-fourth (23%) are in Texas.[15]
- **Children of immigrants are especially likely to lack health insurance.** Children whose parents were not born in the U.S. are three times as likely to lack health insurance as children of those born in the U.S.[16] Non-U.S.-born parents may also encounter other barriers with the health care system and with employers, which exacerbate health insurance and health status issues. For instance, 90% of these uninsured children of have at least one working parent, and more than half have parents with full-time, full-year employment.[17]

Conclusion

Demographic trends point to a continued increase in the proportion of the U.S. population that is Hispanic. Because Latinos are, on average, a youthful population, ensuring the well-being of Latino children and youth under 18 years of age should be a national priority. Indeed, the future economic prosperity of the U.S. increasingly depends on maximizing the educational and employment outcomes of Latino children.

While the Latino population as a whole has increased their economic and political influence over the past two decades, and has made significant contributions to the U.S. in a number of areas, trends in key social and economic indicators for Latino children are troubling. But achieving parity between Latinos and other children in key areas is not an unreachable goal. In fact, remedies to inadequate schooling, high levels of poverty, and lack of health coverage are amenable to change. For other groups, these indicators have been favorably influenced by a combination of social and political will, public policy enhancements, and national-level commitments. But, reversing these pressing and potentially explosive trends for Latinos is not solely a government responsibility. Latino families and adults must play an active role in calling attention to, and taking the lead on, addressing these issues, especially teenage pregnancy and insufficient high school completion. Latino national-level and community-based organizations, as well as research institutions, must expand efforts to document the social and economic challenges that they face. In addition, they should record and seek ways to expand that share of the Latino community itself that has achieved economic success and social mobility.

From a public policy perspective, several initiatives have been documented to have a positive impact on Latino socioeconomic status – and on Latino children's well-being. Specifically:

- **The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has had a significant impact on Latino child poverty.** The EITC's emphasis on working families with children has helped to measurably reduce poverty for children. Although the 1998 pre-tax poverty rates for Hispanic (34.4%) and African American (36.7%) children demonstrate notable reductions since their record peaks in the early-to-mid 1990s, poverty for both groups remains substantially higher than for White children (15.1%). But, in 1998 the net effect of adding the EITC to household income pushed 2.3 million children, including more than 630,000 Hispanic children and 630,000 Black children, above the poverty line. With over one-third (34.2%) of Hispanic households and one-quarter (25.7%) of Black households receiving the EITC in 1998, the after-tax poverty rate for Hispanic and Black children was reduced by almost six percentage points.[18]

- **The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) has allowed many Latino children to receive a regular source of care.** The implementation of CHIP has been

instrumental in ensuring that children without health insurance can be screened and receive appropriate treatment or care for any conditions they may have that previously were left untreated and led to expensive emergency room visits. In addition, this provides Latino children with a routine source of care that could influence healthy lifestyle behaviors in the future, as well as provide a continuum of care for future generations of this relatively young population. A successful ingredient in well-developed, Latino-friendly, state CHIP programs is the active participation of community-based organizations that assist Latinos with their enrollment, answer questions, and serve as advocates.

For several decades, the data on the key indicators outlined above had not improved sufficiently; and some had grown worse. Now, there is a wealth of data, as well as a host of successful efforts and promising initiatives, that can brighten the picture for Latino children. Given the share of the future workforce that Latino children represent, the investments that are needed to improve their well-being are not a matter of good will toward the Hispanic community, but a social and economic imperative for the nation. This is especially true when considering that Latino workers will play an increasingly important role in preserving and strengthening the overall economy and critical social insurance programs such as Social Security and Medicare; two federal programs at the center of U.S. politics and public policy today.

Appendix A:

Children in Puerto Rico*

According to the 1990 Census, there were 3,522,037 people living in Puerto Rico. The population under 18 years of age constituted 32% of the total island population. The most recent population estimates for Puerto Rico indicate that the total population has increased to 3,889,507 persons in 1999, and the share of children under 18 is similar to 1990 figure.

An assessment of the social and economic status of children in Puerto Rico suggests that this segment of the population faces extreme poverty and problems associated with being poor. To put the status of children in a larger family context, the 1990 Census shows that the annual median family income in Puerto Rico was $9,988. In part as a result, over half of the island's families (55%) were poor. Furthermore, two-thirds (67%) of children lived below the poverty level. This means that children in Puerto Rico are being reared in families that have scarce resources with which to support their basic needs.

In 1990, of all families with children under 18 years of age, 26% were headed by a female single parent. Compared to 1980 Census figures, the proportion of female-headed families with children under 18 grew by 43%. The increase in the level of families headed by women is important because incomes for such families are roughly half that of married-couple families. Specifically, the median income for female-headed families was $6,194, whereas for two-parent families it was $11,954.

Regarding school enrollment, there were 637,692 children enrolled in public elementary and high schools in Puerto Rico in 1990. That number declined slightly by February 1999, when the Department of Education reports a school enrollment of 610,933 students in the public school system. Census data from 1990 also show that 22.3% of youth aged 16 to 19 had dropped out of high school. Of these, 87.2% were unemployed or not in the labor force.

Additional information about the population under 18 years of age in Puerto Rico indicates that almost one in five (18%) youth between the ages of 15 and 17 are either married or living in consensual unions.[19] This means that this group may already be parents themselves.

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* The U.S. Census Bureau data on Hispanics do not include data on residents of Puerto Rico. In addition, Census data for Puerto Rico are not updated annually. Most of the data presented in this section come from the 1990 Census.

Appendix B:
Latino Children and Federal Assistance Programs

- **Hispanic children are a small but growing proportion of children receiving assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.** In Fiscal Year (FY) 1998, 23.5% of recipient children on the TANF roll were Hispanic, compared to 28.5% who were White and 40.6% who were Black. Meanwhile, in FY 1996, 22.4% of all child recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cash assistance (TANF's predecessor) were Hispanic, compared to 38.4% who were Black and 31.6% who were White.[20]

- **Among households with children, Latinos constitute the group that is least likely to receive Food Stamps.** In fiscal year 1997, one in six households (16.6%) with children that received Food Stamps were Hispanic. In comparison, that year more than one-third (34.6%) of all households (with children) receiving Food Stamps were Black, and almost two-fifths (38.1%) were White.[21]

- **Hispanics make up a significant portion of those receiving assistance from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program.** In 1996, three in ten (31.1%) women receiving WIC assistance were Latino, while slightly more than one in five were Black non-Hispanic (21.1%), and two in five (43.0%) were White non-Hispanic. Moreover, in 1996 three in ten (29.5%) infants (under 1 year old) receiving WIC assistance were Hispanic, while one-quarter (24.6%) were Black non-Hispanic, and two in five (40.7%) were White non-Hispanic. And that same year, of all children receiving WIC, three in ten were Hispanic (31.4%), one-quarter were Black non-Hispanic (24.2%), and two in five were White non-Hispanic (39.1%).[22]

- **While Hispanic children represent a significant number of Medicaid recipients, they are still more likely than any other racial group to lack health insurance.** In 1998, nearly three in ten (29.8%) Hispanic children received Medicaid benefits, a much higher proportion than White children (15.7%), and a lower proportion than Black children (38.8%). However, in 1998, one-third (30%) of all Hispanic children were not covered by any health insurance, compared to 19.7% of Black children and 14.4% of White children.

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